United Nations ECE/CES/2014/15/Add.2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 March 2014

English
English and Russian only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Sixty-second plenary session
Paris, 9-11 April 2014
Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda
Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists

Report of the high-level seminar on population censuses and migration statistics in the Commonwealth of Independent States

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Summary

This document presents the outcomes of the high-level seminar on population censuses and migration statistics in the Commonwealth of Independent States, held in Gelendzhik (Russian Federation) on 16-18 October 2013. The objective of the high-level seminar was to discuss among heads of national statistical offices the challenges related to conducting population censuses and producing statistics on international migration. The seminar reviewed the lessons learned with the 2010 round of population censuses and the current state of migration statistics. It agreed upon a future course of action to improve population censuses and migration statistics.

The document is submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for information.

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I. Attendance

1. The high-level seminar on population censuses and migration statistics in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held in Gelendzhik (Russian Federation) on 16-18 October 2013. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (Rosstat) jointly organized the seminar. The Seminar is organized in the framework of a three-year cooperation project on censuses and migration statistics with financial support of the Russian Federation.

2. The high-level seminar was attended by participants from national statistical offices, ministries, migration agencies and research institutes representing the following countries: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Spain, Tajikistan, Ukraine and United Kingdom. Furthermore, the representatives of the International Organization for Migration, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), Moscow State Lomonosov University and Minnesota Population Center also participated.

II. Organization of the seminar

3. The seminar was organised by the UNECE Statistical Division and Rosstat. The programme of the seminar consisted of the following sessions:

(a) Overview of population censuses;

(b) The traditional census: challenges, problems and solutions;

(c) Alternative census methods: what could be the future options fo CIS countries?

(d) Round table discussion on the future of population census in CIS countries;

(e) Challenges of migration statistics in CIS countries;

(f) Use of data from the census, household surveys and administrative sources to improve the measurement of international migration;

(g) Availability and exchange of migration data between countries;

(h) Round table discussion on the ways improve migration statistics in CIS countries;

(i) Conclusions on the way forward with population censuses and migration statistics.

III. Conclusions

A. Population censuses

4. National statistical offices of the CIS countries should remain closely involved in the preparation of the Conference of European Statisticians recommendations for the 2020 census round, to ensure that harmonised solutions are found for their specific situations and data needs. The most pressing need is to establish common operational definitions for the place of usual residence, economic activity and labour migrants in the census.

5. For the 2020 round, CIS countries should consider methodological and technological innovations, such as using the internet, tablet computers and e-mapping, all of which could essentially improve the efficiency of census-taking.

6. The use of administrative registers in CIS countries is increasing. National statistical offices should be actively involved in developing and adapting administrative sources for statistical use, taking into account the efficiency gains that this can have for the country's entire statistical system.

7. In planning the content of the next census, national statistical offices should engage in dialogue with the data users and policymakers to be able to meet the national information needs.

8. To focus their efforts, CIS countries need a strategy on how to prepare for their future censuses. Such strategy could aim at maximising efficiency gains and other improvements by the 2030 round of censuses.

B. Migration statistics

9. The differences in the methodologies of compiling migration statistics remain a concern. As a first step towards better understanding of migration statistics and their discrepancies, statistical offices should publish more metadata and explain to the users the advantages and disadvantages of the various data sources.

10. To improve migration statistics, national statistical offices should work in close cooperation with migration services, ministries of interior, labour authorities and other bodies responsible for the management of migration. Access to various administrative data on migration should be improved.

11. There is a need for a guide on the use of administrative data for the measurement of international migration in CIS countries.

12. Countries where the registration systems of migration are still paper-based should maximise efforts for installing electronic systems that allow efficient data processing.

13. Household surveys should take a more prominent place in the system of data sources on migration. There is a need for a guide on the use of household surveys for improving the measurement of international migration in CIS countries.

14. Statistical offices should aim at integrating the different sources of migration data into a system where the different components complement each other.

15. The UNECE Clearing House of Migration Statistics is a useful tool for better understanding of migration statistics of CIS countries, for the estimation of emigration in particular. CIS countries should remain committed to provide migration data and related metadata for sharing through the Clearing House.

C. Future activities

16. UNECE, Rosstat and CIS-STAT are jointly implementing a three-year cooperation project that aims at strengthening the capacity of CIS countries to conduct population censuses and produce statistics on international migration. The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

17. Participation in UNECE expert meetings on population censuses and migration statistics is important for the CIS countries, because it enables their close involvement in the preparation of the Conference of European Statisticians recommendations for the 2020 census round and provides a unique opportunity to learn from the experience of other countries.

18. Meetings of CIS experts will be organized back-to-back with the UNECE meetings on similar topics. In the cooperation project of UNECE, Rosstat and CIS-STAT, the next meetings will be organized as follows:

(a) Expert meeting for CIS countries on finalizing the CES recommendations on the 2020 round of population censuses, to be held back-to-back with the UNECE Expert Meeting on Population Censuses, in September 2014 in Geneva;

(b) Expert meeting for CIS countries on the use of population censuses and household surveys to measure international migration, to be held back-to-back with the UNECE Work Session on Migration Statistics, in October 2014 in a CIS country;

(c) Expert meeting for CIS experts on improving the use of administrative sources to measure international migration in CIS countries, in spring 2015 in a CIS country;

(d) High-level seminar to evaluate the outcome of the project, including the census strategy for CIS countries, in 2015.

19. UNECE will organize the production of a guide, in Russian and English, on the use of administrative data and household surveys to measure international migration in the CIS region, and present it for endorsement to the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2015.

20. Participants thanked UNECE and Rosstat for organizing the High-level Seminar, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation for the financial support to this event.